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Viewing cable 06BUENOSAIRES1439, ARGENTINA'S DRUG CZAR ISOLATED, LEGALIZATION

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g.

#06BUENOSAIRES1439.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06BUENOSAIRES1439	2006-06-27 15:34	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Buenos Aires

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1364385-criticas-furibundas-a-paraguay-bolivia-y-peru>

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OO RUEHWEB

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RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 5195

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 001439

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/22/2016
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA'S DRUG CZAR ISOLATED, LEGALIZATION
EFFORTS GAIN STEAM

REF: A. BA 1485

[1](#)B. BA 1062

Classified By: Ambassador Lino Gutierrez for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On June 22, the DCM, accompanied by Acting DEA Chief and POL Officers, met with Dr. Jose Granero, the head of Argentina's Drug Prevention Secretariat (SEDRONAR) to discuss recent reports that the Interior Minister had ordered several federal law enforcement agencies to stop working with SEDRONAR on counternarcotics issues, such as the interdiction of precursor chemicals. The DCM also wished to gauge the GOA's stance on recent news reports regarding decriminalization proposals being considered in Congress and reported plans by Bolivian President Evo Morales to request that President Nestor Kirchner allow the import and sale of coca leaf and coca related products in Argentina. Granero acknowledged that bureaucratic infighting may have contributed to Minister Anibal Fernandez's directive to federal law enforcement agencies to limit cooperation with SEDRONAR. Granero also discussed plans both within the Ministry of Interior and Congress to de-penalize drug consumption, and outlined his agencies efforts to block these initiatives.

12. (C) On the issue of Evo Morales's interest in having Argentina legalize the import of coca leaf and related products, Granero stressed that any such action would be in direct violation of a 1976 Argentine law prohibiting the planting, import or sale of narcotics, such as coca and opium. He opined that any attempt to decriminalize the import of coca related products would be unconstitutional unless that law were first overturned. Granero, a friend and long-time supporter of Kirchner was clearly displeased by these proposals within the GOA. He lamented that Cabinet Chief Alberto Fernandez was now openly advocating decriminalization and also made negative references about Interior Minister Anibal Fernandez's support for legalization. Granero's constant in-fighting with Interior Minister Fernandez certainly weakens interagency coordination and the overall GOA effort to combat illicit drugs at a time when the evidence suggests major increases in the flow of cocaine coming in from Bolivia. END SUMMARY.

13. (C) On June 22, the DCM, accompanied by POLOFF and DEA, met with Dr. Jose Granero, the head of Argentina's Drug Prevention and Secretariat (SEDRONAR) to review bilateral counternarcotics cooperation, which has been excellent. The DCM also took the opportunity to discuss recent reports that the Interior Minister had ordered several federal law enforcement agencies to stop working with SEDRONAR on counternarcotics issues relating to the interdiction of precursor chemicals. The DCM also sought Granero's views on drug decriminalization efforts in Congress and reports that Bolivian President Evo Morales planned to request that President Nestor Kirchner allow the legal import of coca leaf and coca-related products. The DCM opened the conversation with an account of his recent trip to Salta and Jujuy and his impression that the situation along Argentina's border with Bolivia had worsened considerably since his visit in 2005. He stressed that in discussions with high ranking Gendarmeria officials and several Gendarmeria and Aduanas enlisted personnel, they all acknowledged that both the flow of cocaine and the presence of Bolivian and Colombian narcotics traffickers had increased sharply in recent months. Granero agreed that the situation was worsening since the election of Morales and stressed that Morales' twin policy of supporting the coca growers because of their indigenous roots while claiming to cooperate fully with international efforts to combat narcotics traffickers was an untenable position that could only worsen the trafficking situation in Argentina. Granero said he advocated more forceful international and regional efforts to point out the inconsistencies of his position.

14. (C) The DCM stressed the importance of enhanced inter-agency coordination on the counternarcotics front. Granero agreed, but stated that for several months his agency has essentially been working alone because the Interior Minister had issued written orders to the heads of many Argentine law enforcement agencies forbidding them from cooperating with SEDRONAR. One of Granero's key staffers, Assistant Secretary Gabriel Abboud, added that a recently opened SEDRONAR office in Salta was not currently functioning because the Gendarmeria had balked at staffing the office

with investigators as previously agreed. (NOTE: DEA reports that the head of the Federal Police's Narcotics Unit has been ordered not to attend weekly meetings with SEDRONAR and senior Gendarmeria officers have stated that they have been instructed to avoid contact with the agency. However, DEA and the DEA funded Northern Border Task Force (NBTF) continue to work closely with SEDRONAR and SEDRONAR continues to participate in DEA sponsored regional exercises. END NOTE)

15. (C) With regard to recent reports that the GOA was considering decriminalizing small amounts of certain types of narcotics for personal use, Granero confirmed that the Interior Ministry was currently considering the issue and added that Cabinet Chief Alberto Fernandez was personally in favor of decriminalization. He added that currently the GOA was deeply divided on the issue and that his office was actively fighting these proposals both within the GOA and Congress. He stressed that Kirchner himself was strongly opposed to decriminalization, which would effectively block any legislative effort. (Note: We are not aware of any/any legislative proposal having been drafted or being considered on decriminalization. End Noted).

16. (C) The DCM also expressed concern over reports that Bolivian president Evo Morales planned to ask Kirchner to allow Bolivia to export coca leaf and coca-related products into Argentina. Granero stated his strong opposition to the idea, adding Kirchner was not considering any such action. He pointed out that a 1976 Argentine anti-narcotics law that specifically banned the import of coca leaf or coca related products. He added that even if Kirchner was inclined to do so, which he was not, he would first need to pass a new law or cause the 1976 law to be repealed. Granero said he saw little possibility of this happening.

17. (C) COMMENT: Granero, like Kirchner, is an ex-governor of Santa Cruz Province, and a strong personal friend and supporter of Kirchner. Granero is a hardliner on drugs and is a staunch opponent of any decriminalization or legalization initiatives. The growing rift between Granero and Minister of Interior Fernandez is troubling as it threatens to greatly reduce the effectiveness of the GOA's counternarcotics efforts and coming as it does on the heels of increased narcotics trafficking from Bolivia, is a real cause for concern. Post's law enforcement team will continue to engage the GOA at all levels in hopes of enhancing cooperation between the law enforcement agencies that report to the Interior Ministry and SEDRONAR.

GUTIERREZ